RODENT PROOFING

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The cold weather has arrived. This means that little creatures will be seeking warmth for the winter. Many golf course superintendents will soon experience the patter of little feet coming from the walls of buildings or maybe finding little black pellets where they shouldn't be found (kitchens, etc.).

Mice come from barns, sheds, straw and wood piles, trash heaps and fencerows. They get into buildings through open or unscreened doors, windows, ventilators and through cracks and breaks in the foundation or through holes in the floor around pipes. They also may be carried in with produce (potatoes, carrots, etc.).

To keep these rodents out of a building, cover openings such as windows, doors, and ventilators with 1/4-inch wire mesh (hardware cloth). Keep doors closed when not in use. A good spring device will make sure they swing shut, and a spring lock will insure that they stay that way. Also, close unnecessary openings with concrete sheet metal and fit pieces of sheet metal around pipes to make a collar through which rodents cannot gnaw.

Golf course superintendents should also take measures not to store large quantities of food in a garage overnight before bringing it in for storage — a curious mouse may get in. Such items should be carefully examined before being brought into a building, if possible.

Concrete basement floors and solid walls tend to discourage rats and mice from nesting inside the building, especially when the floors are free of litter. When storing materials in a basement, they should be placed on stands about a foot or more above the floor. Golf course superintendents also should avoid letting basement storage areas become disordered. An accumulation of litter behind a sink, stove, or cabinet can shelter a small rodent. Such facilities should be placed flush against the wall or far enough away so that the space can be cleaned easily.

Because rodents enter a building from the outside, one should avoid offering sanctuaries adjacent to or near the building. Coal, wood, or trash should never be piled against the walls of a building, and it is best that steps leading to the building be made of concrete or masonry. If the back steps are wood, the space beneath should be kept open and clean. Stored materials, such as boxes, lumber, or pipes should be kept at least a foot off the ground.

The old fashioned wooden-base snap trap is still the most effective device for golf course superintendents in dealing with a limited number of rodents. For use against mice, a piece of bacon, a raisin, a gumdrop or a smear of peanut butter on the trigger will make attractive bait. When one is after rats, use a larger rat-snap trap and place between some boxes and a wall. As the rodent passes through the small corridor he walks over the trigger and is killed instantly. Several traps should be used at once, and about a dozen should be kept on hand.

Next month, "Fundamentals of Rodent Proofing."

SECOND ANNUAL CDGA GREENS COMMITTEE SEMINAR

CONSERVATION:

Members seemed most interested in the problems of when the course should be closed, winter sports on the golf course and the value of new equipment.

Superintendents were insistent that the responsibility of closing the course should lie solely in their hands. They were agreed that spring is the most critical time for turf damage. It was recommended that green chairmen send a letter to the membership stating the reasons for closing the course. In the fall, players should remain off the course until frost is removed from the grass plants by syringing or normal melting. Carts should be restricted from use when there is a white frost.

Though each course has different drainage systems and soil conditions, it was recommended generally that greens be closed from late November/early December until the frost is completely out of the ground in spring. The most serious damage to turf occurs after the soil has been frozen and the upper portion of the green has begun to thaw; the surface layer of the soil is overly wet and slippery. Foot traffic at this time will cause severe compaction, tearing of the roots at the point where they penetrate the still frozen area. When the soil is partially thawed, injury is serious and long lasting. This condition is always associated with beautiful late winter and early spring days when the air is warm and the soil is cold.

Many clubs use picture displays or slides to show the membership winter play damage — what it is and how it happened.

Recommended solution for winter golf — cut a winter green area, a 30 foot circle, in front of regular greens. Cut regulation cup in the winter green, then cut an 8 inch cup, two inches deep, around the regulation cup. This permits the flag to stand upright and gives the players a larger cup to putt into. Winter greens may be top dressed with pure sand and can be dyed with a harmless green spray so the players can see the green after the other grass turns brown. Start cutting winter greens in October but don't put cups in until necessary.

When frost is leaving the ground, every green should be checked because some greens become playable as much as 10 days ahead of others.

It was suggested that after trimming shrubs in the fall, the brush be placed on elevated greens to reduce wind and ice damage during winter. Greens should be treated for snow mold prior to placing brush.

If it's not possible to cut a temporary cup in front of an elevated green, let golfers play a 16 or 17 hole course during the winter.

Use temporary tees in front of regular tees during winter.

It was also suggested the course be played backwards, placing a temporary tee in front of the green and cutting a cup in the regular tee.

SNOWMOBILES:

Snowmobiles should not be permitted on the course unless snow is more than 6 inches deep. If snowmobiles are operated on insufficient snow cover, 100% of the turf underneath will be lost. Many clubs no longer permit snowmobiles at all because members will not keep them in the areas marked for snowmobiles. Some courses have determined regular routes, marked with red flags, to keep the snowmobiles away from traps, off greens and away from

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elevated areas where the snow cover might blow away.

Olympia Fields permits snowmobiles on a definite route and requires a certificate of insurance be deposited with the club by drivers. The club has employed a "grounds patrol officer" who will work year round. In summer he will patrol carts, in winter, the snowmobiles and in spring and fall, he will be used to keep carts away from areas where they should not be driven due to frost conditions or reseeding or sodding.

NEW MACHINERY:

All superintendents present were enthusiastic about a mechanized trap-raker and a riding greens mower. One stated his course has 56 traps and they all can be raked in 3½ hours. The raker keeps sand fluffy and dry and there's no longer wet sand thrown on greens. Golfers like the texture of the sand. Needs an experienced operator to use and keep adjusted. It can also be used for tilling, rototilling, raking cart paths and flower beds.

The riding greens mower cuts tees and aprons as well as greens, can cut in several directions per green, and saves at least 1/3 man hours over manual mowing of the above areas. This machine may not be suited for every golf course, depending upon size and undulations of each green.

After more discussion the committee agreed that the nicest days of fall and spring are the most critical for turf and completed the program by urging all superintendents to "be sure everything you do is done properly. **Don't take shortcuts."**